

Concerned Citizens of Talkeetna
P.O. Box 871
Talkeetna, Alaska 99676
June 17, 1998

Local Boundary Commission Staff
333 W. 4th Avenue, Suite 220
Anchorage, AK 99501-2341
Fax: (907) 269 - 4539 or 4520

Dear LBC Staff:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Petition for Incorporation of a Home Rule City for Talkeetna.

We would like to express our strong support for an incorporated city of Talkeetna. Having reviewed the Petition, we agree with the petitioners that there is a need for incorporation for our town and we concur with the reasons expressed in Exhibit A. Indeed, our town and the tourist industry which provides the major economic base are growing rapidly, making the need for incorporation increasingly acute--now is the time for local citizens to have a more direct role in decision making, policy setting and governing.

Having listened to comments expressed around town and at the public meeting held here in late May, it is obvious that, while many Talkeetna residents support incorporation, there is disagreement about some of the specific proposals in the Petition. One issue that concerns many of us is the water and sewer service. Although a city government usually takes over this responsibility, it is possible that in our case it would be better for the Matanuska-Susitna Borough to retain this power/duty. Borough Planning Director John Duffy has discussed this issue with residents and indicated that there should be no problem resolving it. It is essential to continue the discussion and to come to a clearly-expressed, written decision about the water/sewer so that this issue does not remain a major roadblock to incorporation.

Other areas of disagreement about the Petition focus on the proposed Operating Budget. Opinions differ on how the City of Talkeetna should best collect revenue to fund city government. The question of whether a 15% Bed Tax will be levied for over 50 beds can be decided by a yes or no vote by each voter--incorporation is not dependent upon voter approval of this tax. However, incorporation is dependent upon voter approval of a 4% Seasonal Sales Tax and, while we support it, there is some disagreement over this issue. Likewise, there is contention over expenses, particularly the salaries and benefits for a City personnel.

Because it is crucial for Talkeetna to incorporate now, we believe it is essential that we work together as a community to reach an agreement on these and other issues. We would like to call upon the Talkeetna Community Council to sponsor a series of meetings in the early fall to bring folks together to discuss the Petition so

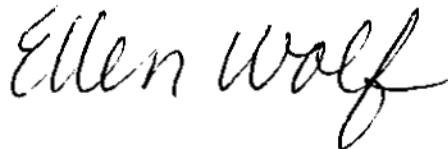
that we can present a united front of support for incorporation at the public hearings in October. Members of the Chamber of Commerce as well as our group and ANY AND ALL interested citizens should be included in these discussion.

Certainly a main area for discussion is the issue of taxation, including questions of how much to tax, when to tax, what should be taxed and what should be exempt, how taxes would be collected, if there should be a cap on the amount of tax for any one transaction, etc. Also on the agenda should be the issue of what level of City Management we will need and what kind of salary do we need to offer in order to attract quality personnel. Looking at how other Alaskan cities address these issues would be very helpful.

In summary, then, we support incorporation for Talkeetna and are hopeful that, by working together, members of our community can work out the details so that a vote on the Petition for Incorporation will be successful.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ellen Wolf". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Ellen Wolf

cc Talkeetna Community Council
Talkeetna Chamber of Commerce